

MASSAGE

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10 WAYS TO
BE PRESENT

STEPPING-
STONES TO
SUCCESS

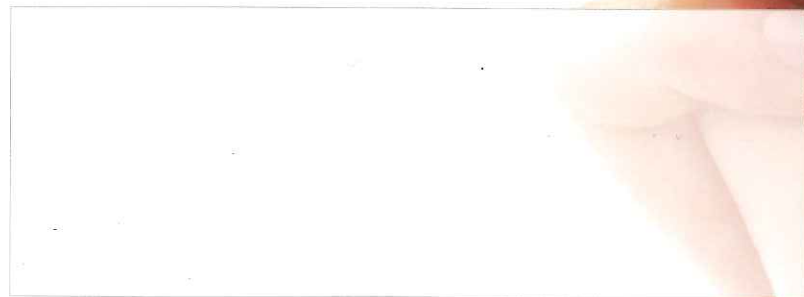
SOFTWARE TO
HELP RUN YOUR
PRACTICE!

DO YOU HAVE WHAT
IT TAKES TO BE AN
EXPERT WITNESS?

Mindfulness

IN MASSAGE & LIFE

5 SOCIAL MEDIA FAILS...
AND HOW TO FIX THEM



Research: HEAD MASSAGE DECREASES ANXIETY, BOOSTS MOOD

Jennifer Cosman

Jennifer Cosman, 45, is a newcomer to the practitioner world, but a longtime enthusiast of massage and its benefits. She graduated from Bellus Academy on May 1, and is employed at Anderson Chiropractic & Wellness Center, where she practices Swedish and deep tissue massage. A native Californian and resident of San Diego, Jennifer and her husband are proud parents of an 11-year-old son, Lucien.



COURTESY OF JENNIFER COSMAN

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When and how did you decide massage was the right career for you?

A: After I was diagnosed with Stargardt disease, the most common form of juvenile macular degeneration, I found it increasingly difficult to perform my teaching duties. Another employee at the elementary school where I worked mentioned that she'd enrolled in massage therapy school and really enjoyed the experience. I'd always enjoyed helping people and wanted a job where I could make a difference in people's lives.

When I visited Bellus Academy to check out the program, instructor Brent Haney mentioned that ancient Eastern cultures actually required massage therapists to be blind—no one was permitted to see the Emperor's unclothed body. Massage also tied in with my interest in holistic health and well-being.

What strategies did you use to overcome your visual impairments?

A: Brent would email me lecture notes and textbook content. I used special technology to enlarge copy so I could read from my peripheral vision. Brent would also read me the exams in class and provide extra time for me to complete exams. During muscle and anatomy classes, I sometimes served as a classroom model, which allowed me to learn through kinetics and audio senses.

How did you motivate yourself during tough times?

A: I did not want to disappoint my son. As a parent, I've worked to model a solid work ethic and communicate that you should never give up. I wanted to be a good

example of persevering toward my education goal. My dad was a helicopter pilot in the Marines, and he always told my sister and me that failure was not an option.

While providing massage, what issues do you have to address as a result of being visually impaired?

A: Reading the appointments in the receptionist's book can be challenging, but I work with a great group of people who are always there to help. Reading client notes and charts can also be challenging, so I've learned to use technology to enlarge copy. I always make sure to verify verbally the information my clients write down.

What advice would you give others who might have second thoughts about a massage career due to a disability?

A: Expect to be challenged, but stay focused on the reward. There were many times I cried or thought about quitting—but I kept my eye on my goal. And be prepared for the journey to be challenging. People entering our profession often don't understand the tremendous amount of anatomy content that must be mastered.

What is the most rewarding aspect of being a massage therapist?

A: When a client says his or her shoulders felt great after a massage or that walking no longer bothered them so much after a massage. Helping someone in pain feel better is a terrific feeling for me. I am a huge advocate for deep muscle massage and the role it can play in relieving spasms and tight muscles, as well as reducing pain. 